

But you have to decide whether we're going to move forward together and whether the President, the Congress, and the National Government are going to be your partner to help people have the tools to make the most of their own lives, to build strong careers, strong families, and strong communities. I've tried to be that kind of partner. I'm proud that this country is better off than it was 4 years ago. I'm glad we're on the right track to the 21st century. And I have run a campaign of ideas, not insults, to give you the ideas of what I will do in the next 4 years, if my contract is renewed in less than 2 weeks from today. But you have to decide. You have to decide.

If you want Lake Charles to move forward together; if you believe that in order to have a successful work environment, you have to move forward together; if when you go to church on Sunday, you like to be sitting there with people who are committed to moving forward and learning together; if you believe your family has to work by people working together, shouldn't your country work that way too? Shouldn't your country work that way too? [Applause]

You know, there's been a lot of debate about it in this country. But I believe the First Lady

was right; I think it does take a village to raise a child, to build a community, to build a country, to build a future. And I want you to help us build that village.

I have said all across America, I am trying to build a bridge to the 21st century that is wide enough and strong enough for all of us to walk across. Louisiana needs that bridge. My native State to the north needs that bridge. America needs that bridge. We dare not walk away from the elderly, from the frail, from those who need our help. We dare not walk away from our children and their future. We do not need to sacrifice our environment to grow our economy.

All we need to do is to make a commitment to build that bridge and to move forward together. You've got the right slogan, Lake Charles. Let's live by it. Let's know that our responsibility begins by showing up on Tuesday, November 5th, to vote for it. And let's build that bridge together to the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:08 p.m. at Northrup Grumman Corp. In his remarks, he referred to Northrup Grumman Corp. employee Jami Lowe.

Remarks in Marrero, Louisiana October 24, 1996

Thank you. Thanks. Thank you very much. I was listening to Yvonne McPherson talk, wondering if she was Reverend McPherson. [Laughter] And when she really got stirred up I thought, if this lady passes the plate we're all going to leave here broke. [Laughter] Thank you. Thank you for your wonderful, wonderful words and your wonderful example.

Thank you, Lieutenant Renee Washington, for your 18 years and for the work you're doing to make our children safer and for your great remarks. I want to thank all of you for making all of us who don't live here feel so welcome tonight. I understand the West Jefferson High School Band played. I thank them for that.

I want to thank Congressman Cleo Fields for coming with me tonight and for all the work he's doing on our behalf. Thank you. My good

friend Congressman Bill Jefferson, who plays both sides of the river here, and that's good politics. Sometimes it's not good in public life to straddle the fence, but I picked up pretty quick it's a good thing to straddle this river. [Laughter] If his in-laws hadn't been from here, I think he would have moved them over here just to make sure he was covered.

Thank you, my good friend Senator John Breaux, for all you do for Louisiana and all you've done for me. Thank you, and God bless you, sir. Thank you, Mary Landrieu, for running for the Senate and for standing up for what is right and supporting our crime programs. Thank you.

And Sheriff, thank you. I want to thank everybody in the sheriff's department who's worked on this program. I understand that Deputy

Chief Gus Clavery has done a lot of work on it and others have. But this STAR program is an example of an issue that I think is very important.

When I ran for President, I found people all over America frustrated and angry by the crime problem but nearly resigned to it. There were no new ideas in many places, so people said, "Just throw the book at them and leave me alone, and I'll duck and dodge the bullets"—everywhere. But there were, thank goodness, a number of local leaders in law enforcement like Harry Lee—there isn't really nobody like Harry Lee, but you know what I mean. [Laughter]

People that—I wasn't going to say this, but I'm going to say this. As you know, it's fairly well known throughout the country that I enjoy a meal now and then. [Laughter] And last time I came to New Orleans—I always love to come here, and I'm always angry if they make me leave without eating when I'm in here. So Harry took John Breaux and me to lunch, and I was finally with somebody I didn't have to be a bit embarrassed by enjoying my lunch with. I loved it. I loved it. And we had a good one, didn't we, Sheriff? [Laughter]

But the important thing—let me get back to this. Law enforcement leaders like Harry Lee who understood—and I found them all around America—that it wasn't only important to do things right, it was important to do the right things, which is very different. It was one thing for a person with a badge and a uniform on to look tough, be strong, and not do anything wrong, and quite another thing for a person to always be searching out new ideas, ways to involve people in not only solving crime but preventing crimes in the first place.

You heard him say up here when he talked—he just picked up on something I mentioned at lunch about the way New York City had dramatically lowered the crime rate by radically increasing its ability to move law enforcement officers around every day among neighborhoods based on where the crime was moving. So I come—the next time I come to Louisiana, he tells me he's instituted the same thing. That's what we need, local leadership, citizens like Yvonne McPherson, dedicated officers like Renee Washington, and law enforcement leaders like Harry Lee who want to do the right things as well as do things right.

And I was astonished when I ran for President the extent to which people on the one

hand were screaming for something to be done about crime and on the other hand, absolutely believed nothing could be done about it. Deep down inside they had sort of given up, but they wanted us to make the right moves and make some right noises but they didn't really believe we could take our streets, our schools, our neighborhoods, and ultimately, our children back.

And I began to see things that changed my mind. I've told this story a lot of times, but I made a good friend one night early in 1992 when I was dropping in the polls in New Hampshire and people were writing my obituary. I went to New York City to a fundraiser, and frankly, I was a pretty sad case. I was feeling sorry for myself. And I was walking through the kitchen to get around like we sometimes do, to get around to where I was going to give the speech.

And a Greek immigrant with a waiter's uniform stopped me. And he said, "Now, Mr. President, my son is 10. He's in the fifth grade; he studies this election. He says I should vote for you, so I think I will vote for you, if you will do one thing for me." I said, "What do you want?" He said, "I want to make my boy free." And I said, "Well, sir," I said, "Mr. Theofanis, this is a democracy." He said, "Yes it is, but my boy is not free." He said, "Where I lived before, I was poor, much poorer than I am here in New York. But at least we were free. Here, across the street from our apartment in New York, there is this beautiful park. I can't let my child go to the park unless I go with him. I'm lucky I live only 2 blocks from the school and it's actually quite a good school, but my boy can't walk down the street to the school unless I go with him. So I'll vote for you, but you have to make my boy free."

And I heard stories like this all over America. But I also saw neighborhoods in Los Angeles where the police had cut the response time down to 2 minutes. I saw streets in Philadelphia that had been infested by gangs and drugs, where neighborhood groups had worked with the police to take their streets back. And just a little bit, here and there I would see these glimmers of hope, and I promised myself that if I got elected President, I was going to take the politics out of crime and try to put the police and the people back into the business of lowering the crime rate and bringing safety

back to America and restoring fundamental freedom.

Now, the crime bill that you've heard everybody brag on—I appreciate that, all the credit they're trying to give me. All I did was take the politics out of crime. All we did was to let law enforcement people and community activists, like the folks that have spoken tonight, tell us what the Federal Government ought to do to be a good partner to help communities take their streets back and give their kids a future back. That is all we did.

But as it turned out, that was quite a lot, because for 6 years, the debate in Washington had been a bunch of rhetoric and who could talk the toughest and who could do the least because we didn't want anything to make any of the organized groups mad. And the problem was, nothing ever got done. So all we did was to let law enforcement officials, in effect, tell us what ought to be done, let community activists tell us what ought to be done; that's what the '94 crime bill was about.

It's been a remarkable 4 years in the area of fighting crime. In this crime bill, we agreed that over a 5-year period, we'd fund 100,000 police. After only 2 years, we've funded almost half of them, so we're ahead of schedule and under budget. As the sheriff said, there were no strings in this bill except one. There was just one string; the money had to be spent to hire law enforcement officers who would go on the street, not behind a desk. That was the only string. We said, "You figure out who to hire; you figure out how to train them; you decide how to deploy them; you decide how you're going to relate to the community. It's all your decision. We don't know in Washington how to do that."

But we do know that in 30 years the violent crime rate has tripled and the police forces have only gone up by 10 percent in this country. There's no way you could do it. We had place after place after place that were more violent without any more police officers and they were covering less because they had to go around two at a time and then they had to get in the car, so nobody was on the street. And we were losing the battle because we weren't doing the right things. So that's all we tried to do.

We also passed the "three strikes and you're out" law for people who are prosecuted in Federal court for serious crimes. They do it a third time, they're not eligible for parole, not ever—

and life in prison. We passed the capital punishment for drug kingpins and people who kill our law enforcement officers in the line of duty. We passed a strong safe and drug-free schools program to give our little children something to say yes to, to put more of those D.A.R.E. officers and other people out there in the classrooms when the kids were in grade school, saying drugs are wrong, drugs are illegal, drugs can kill you.

We're giving schools more funds to stay open later. I've fought to maintain the summer jobs program. I've fought to try to give our young people something to say yes to. I'm now trying to make sure we open the doors of college education to everybody, so no young person has to worry about whether they'll be able to afford to go to college if they stay in school and stay off drugs and stay out of trouble and make their grades. I think that's important. That's important.

We've also tried to support more people like Yvonne in citizens groups. Over the next 4 years, we're going to try to mobilize another million volunteers to work with the police to get the crime rate down. San Diego, California, has the lowest crime rate of any of the 10 big cities in America, even though it's right on the border where we're constantly fighting illegal immigration and people trying to bring drugs across the border. In any of the 10 biggest cities, they've got the lowest crime rate. Why? One reason is, they have hundreds and hundreds of retired people who work in these citizens groups with the police not only to catch criminals but to keep crime from happening in the first place, watching out for the little kids on the street, watching out for their neighbors. They know whenever somebody's gone on vacation, they watch their home, they work together. So this is something we've got to do together.

There's more to be done. We have to continue to support these police officers. You know, Harry Lee and I were laughing—I once had a lifetime membership in the NRA; I think it's been revoked now because I stood up for the Brady bill. But we didn't take any guns away from hunters or sportsmen, not a single one. We haven't done that. But at least 60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers couldn't get guns. Now if you beat up your wife or your kids, you can't get a handgun under the new law. It's a good thing. It's a good thing. I would oppose any effort to undermine my ability to duck hunt—

[laughter]—or anybody's ability to be a championship skeet shooter or to do anything else that's appropriate and legal. But I still think we ought to ban those bullets that are built only for one purpose, to pierce the bulletproof vests that our police officers wear. I don't see why we need those things out there.

Let me tell you, we just started this program 2 years ago, as I said, when I signed the crime bill in 1994. Today I met with the first—the family of the first one of the police officers hired under our crime bill killed in the line of duty. I met here in Louisiana, in Lake Charles—I met with that officer's widow and two beautiful, beautiful young sons. And I thought to myself, you know, if people like these folks here are going to put their lives on the line for us, the least we can do is tell them if they put on a bulletproof vest, it will protect them from being killed. That's the least we can do for them.

What I want you to believe is, number one, this is not an accident, what Harry Lee said about reducing the violent crime rate and the crime rate by 85 percent. That is not an accident. That happened because people did the right things. The second thing I want you to believe is the Federal Government—your President and the Congress—we can make a difference, and we are. But we're not doing it because of our political connections or philosophy. We're doing it because we took the politics out of crime. The third thing I want you to know is this could all be reversed. In the budget I vetoed last year, that the majority in Congress passed, they eliminated the 100,000 police program. Again, I had to stop them from trying to cut back on it. For reasons I do not understand, they do not believe in it. They tried to cut the safe and drug-free schools program in half. Drug use is going down in America, folks, big time. But drug use among children under 18 is still going up. The last thing we need to do is to cut back on safe and drug-free schools effort. We need more adults in those schools talking to those kids.

And my newest proposal, which is probably going to get me in trouble with some of the young people in America, but I want to say, look, 90 percent of our kids are drug-free and we need to support them and we need to lift up the good kids and we need to give them something to say yes to. I want to say that again. We need to say it. But I'm going to

ask those 90 percent to do something that may be unpopular with them. I'm going to ask them to go along with my proposal to get every State in the country to make a drug test part of getting a driver's license so we can find the other 10 percent and save their lives and help them and give them a chance for the future.

I say again, you deserve most of the credit here, the sheriff, Lieutenant Washington, Yvonne McPherson, all of you that work in this, these police officers. You deserve the credit. But we have to do our part. And we have tried to do our part. And I want you to sustain this effort by what you say on November 5th.

And I know what Mary Landrieu will say; she'll stay with us. She'll support us. And that's important. So I want you to help by sending people to Washington who will continue to take crime fighting out of politics and give it back to the people of every neighborhood in America. That's important, and Mary will do that. That's important.

And I want you to continue to support these efforts here. But just remember this—if you don't remember anything else, remember this: This is an example of what we can do when we stop talking and start acting and when we reach across the lines that divide us and join hands and agree on things that we all agree on. We do not have to put up with unacceptable rates of crime and violence. We do not have to put up with what I have seen in America.

We're almost to Halloween now. Just a couple of years ago in Baltimore—where the mayor has labored mightily on this—there was this wonderful young man, 17 years old, his whole life before him, took two little kids out trick-or-treating so they would be safe. And somebody shot him from across the street and ended his life just for kicks. Last year in Washington, in a suburb, a 13-year-old honor student standing innocently at a school bus stop—a city bus stop, shot down just because he happened to be standing in the wrong place in a drive-by shooting. You don't have to put up with that. You don't have to give up your children to that. You don't have to do that. We can make a difference.

We are making a difference, and you're making a difference here. And I will do my best for 4 more years to make sure we have 4 more years of declining crime here in Jefferson Parish.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:33 p.m. at the Marrero Action Playground. In his remarks, he referred to community activist Yvonne McPherson,

who introduced the President; and Lt. Renee Washington, director, Project STAR, and Harry Lee, sheriff, Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office.

Remarks to the Community in Atlanta, Georgia

October 25, 1996

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much. Hello, Atlanta! Are you feeling good? You made the Sun come out.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to be in Atlanta and in Georgia. I thank all of you for being here, but I want to say a special word of thanks to those who have helped this be a great youth day for our campaign all across America. We're talking to young Americans about their future.

So let's give this great band Cracker another hand. Didn't they do a good job? [*Applause*] And I thank my longtime supporter Michael Stipe from R.E.M. for coming here. Thank you, Michael. Thank you, Kathleen Bertrand, for singing the national anthem so beautifully. And thank you, Becky Ahmann, for giving us an example of the future we are trying to build in your own life. She gave a good speech, didn't she? She ought to do this for a living.

I thank all the distinguished Georgians who are here, but one especially. Thank you, Coretta Scott King, for coming today to be with us. Thank you. Mayor Campbell, thank you for your indefatigable enthusiasm and for your positive leadership of this great city. Billy Payne, thank you for your support and for making the Atlanta games the greatest games in the history of the Olympics. You did a brilliant job.

To all the political leaders who are here, the State elected officials, Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney and the others who are here—she's still fighting, and she's going to be rewarded on election day—I thank you all.

Georgia has given many great leaders to America: Martin Luther King; President Jimmy Carter; my great friend of many years John Lewis, who talked about building his own bridges today; Zell Miller, who has given the Nation an idea with the HOPE scholarships in Georgia. But when the history of this era is written, there will be few people who have made the contribution to our security and our

future that Senator Sam Nunn has, and we are all in his debt. Sam Nunn was one of the first people who convinced me that we ought to have a national service program to give young people a chance to serve in their communities and earn their way through college, and 60,000 young Americans have been part of AmeriCorps. Thank you, Sam Nunn, for that. Sam Nunn led the fight to get Congress to appropriate funds to help the Russians pay to tear up their nuclear missiles and their nuclear missile sites. And he's one of the big reasons that there are no Russian missiles targeted at the young people of the United States of America today. Thank you, Senator Sam Nunn.

And Georgia is about to be given a chance to add another person to the list of distinguished nationally significant servants of the people of this great State and our country. And I hope you will send Max Cleland to the United States Senate. You know, every time we have an election, someone stands up and starts talking about sacrifice and serving your country. I think we all know that Max Cleland knows something about sacrifice and serving our country. And yet, he just kept on giving. He never quit giving to America. And——

[*At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.*]

The President. You all relax. When people don't have a side of their own to make, they try to shout their opponents down. Just relax. Just relax.

Let me tell you, Max Cleland has kept on giving for a lifetime, with a smile on his face and a song in his heart, always reaching out his hand to other people. Now, the other side, their idea of sacrifice is to take Head Start away from 5-year-olds, college loans away from students, to take the environment away from all of our people, and to weaken our future economy for short-term promises. I think Max Cleland's idea of service to America is the right